

4th ANNUAL AWARD WINNING LECTURE SERIES RESHAPING ROCHESTER PLANNING FOR THE PUBLIC REALM • SUSTAINABLE URBANISM



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RICHARD J. JACKSON, MD MPH



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Richard Jackson is an internationally recognized environmental health expert opening our eyes to the effects of land use and transportation policies on physical and mental health. In the 19th century, America overcame the plight of infectious disease by implementing design practices that were shape around sanitation ideals. We are now in an era dominated by sprawl and fragmented communities which have cultivated a new epidemic, that of coronary arterial disease, hypertension, diabetes, and mental disorders. The distance between destinations such as school, work, home, and shopping centers create an impassable barrier for those who don't or can't drive, eg. children, seniors, and those who can't afford private transportation. Jackson suggests that our narrowed transportation choices create a lack of "incidental" exercise such as walking or biking to destinations. Auto-centrism is a leading contributor to the national obesity epidemic and has also degraded air quality inducing the frequency of asthma. In parallel, there is a rising trend of depression and other negative mental health manifestations. He explores these issues in a book he co-authored entitled, Urban Sprawl and Public Health: Designing, Planning, and Building for Healthy Communities.

Jackson believes the environment ought to be shaped to protect human well-being, economy, and prosperity. A sustainable community would require schools to be accessible to students by foot or bike. With good public transportation or town centers within walking distance, kids would no longer feel like hostages while parents could drop the role of the harried chauffeur. Subdivisions and housing would not only be sensibly located but also ideally priced with wider cost ranges to instill more cultural richness and exposure for children. Jackson enlightens us that "we humans often assume that what is, had to be that way. In reality, virtually everything in our built environment is the way it is because someone designed it that way."

Dr. Jackson is the Chair of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at the School of Public Health at the University of California Los Angeles. He was the first director of the Graham Environmental Sustainability Institute at the University of Michigan. His work has influenced the California Birth Defects Monitoring Program, federal laws that eliminated the use of hazardous pesticides, and the creation of a national asthma epidemiology and control program in Atlanta. While in Atlanta, he oversaw a childhood lead poisoning prevention program. He was originally a pediatrician and has been in the field of public health for 25 years.

**Gleason Works Auditorium • 1000 University Avenue
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